

# A new Genus and Species of Fish from India

BY

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*(With a text-figure)*

While studying the fishes of Khasi Hills (India) in the collection of Eastern Regional Station of the Zoological Survey of India, I came across some remarkable specimens of a little eel-like fish which on detailed examination proved to be of a new genus. The new genus belongs to the suborder Mastacembeloidei (Greenwood, Rosen, Weitzman and Myers 1966) of the order Perciformes but is not being placed in any family since its relationship with other members of the suborder is still under active study. All the specimens of this new genus which is named in honour of Dr. R. S. Pillai of this station, have been collected by bag net from edges of streams amidst dense overhanging vegetation at altitudes ranging from 3,500 ft. (1066·8 metres) to 5,000 ft. (1524·0 metres).

**Pillaia** gen. nov.

Small eel-like fish with long anteriorly depressed head ; without spines before dorsal or anal or anywhere else on the body ; with both dorsal and anal united with the caudal of 8-10 unbranched rays ; without scales ; lateral line clearly discernible on the head, and less distinct on the body ; branchiostegals 6 ; a rather indistinct fleshy rostral appendage bearing anterior tubular nostrils ; eyes fairly prominent, placed dorsally ; gill-openings wide, extending dorsally to the level of pectoral origin ; gill-membranes free from each other and from isthmus ; mouth wide and horizontal ; teeth on jaws arranged in narrow bands, small, sharply pointed and curved inwards ; pectorals small ; ventrals absent.

Monotypic : type *Pillaia indica* sp. nov.

**Pillaia indica** sp. nov.

B. VI. D. 34-36. A. 34-36. C. 8-10. P. 7-9.

Depth of body 7·36 to 9·39, length of head 15·0 to 17·40, snout to dorsal origin 58·75 to 61·10, length of caudal 6·94 to 9·92, length of pectoral 1·35 to 2·24 in % of standard length. Snout 25·00 to 28·00,

eye-diameter 7.28 to 8.34, interorbital distance 7.69 to 9.10, post-orbital head length 61.50 to 66.60 in % of head length.

Body colour (in spirit) variable, upper part of body light to dark purplish brown, the lower part yellowish or very light brown; fins dirty white; series of open Vs of dark colour and dark lines on either side of the body (Fig. 1).

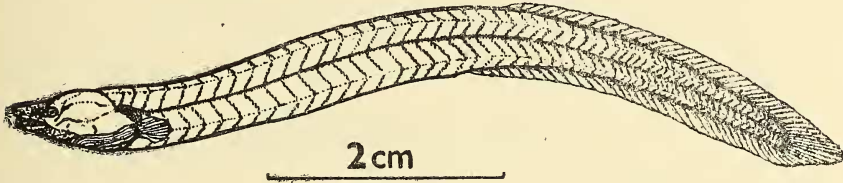


Fig. 1. *Pillaia indica* gen. et. sp. nov. Holotype

In a specimen of about 70.0 mm., ripe ovaries containing large (1.0 mm.) subspherical ova were found. The gut contents included parts of mayfly (Ephemeroptera) naiads, parts of other insects and spores.

*Type-specimens*: All the type-specimens temporarily kept at this Station will be ultimately deposited in the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta.

*Holotype*: Reg. No. V/ERS 456, total length 77.0 mm, from Sumer stream, c. 22 Km. N. of Shillong, Khasi & Jaintia Hills (Meghalaya), India, coll. R. K. Varshney, 24th November, 1967, altitude 1068.80 metres.

*Paratypes*: Four specimens, out of which two, Reg. Nos. V/ERS 457-458, total lengths 37.0 & 40.0 mm., with the same data as that of holotype; one Reg. No. V/ERS 459, total length 72.0 mm., from a stream at Umshing, c. 13 Km. N. of Shillong, coll. M. Rynth, 13th August, 1963, altitude 1,524 metres; one Reg. No. V/ERS 460, total length 41.0 mm., from the same locality as that of holotype, coll. R. S. Pillai, 6th February, 1971.

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